Level 3 Extended Project Qualification: options for A level Japanese teachers

Introduction

The Pearson Edexcel Level 3 Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) is an engaging and meaningful way for learners to extend their studies in new directions, developing a deeper understanding of content within and beyond the curriculum. It helps develop important academic study skills for higher education and employment skills for the world of work.

We have asked our senior examining team and MFL teachers to think about how the four units could be used for further Japanese language studies.

The Project

The Level 3 EPQ provides opportunities for the development of critical, reflective and problem-solving skills through the planning, research and evaluation of a self-selected topic. Students also develop independent learning skills that lay down excellent foundations for when they go into further education or the world of work.

All of the details and requirements for the qualification as well as a wealth of support material can be found on our qualifications website here and our Future Ready website here. Following their in-depth study, students are asked to produce one of the following four project outcomes:

1. A dissertation
2. An investigation/field study
3. A performance
4. An artefact.

The main element across all four outcomes is that **all work submitted for assessment must be produced in English.** However, the research and study can be undertaken in any language.

The Project and Japanese topics

The project can be used to replace or to complement the A level Japanese teaching and learning. It can also be used for students to explore the cultural heritage of their own or other people in their community, as well as allowing students to pursue an interest or passion outside of the curriculum.

As a starting point, you may want to consider adapting and using materials used for A level themes 1-4. These are:

- **Changes in society** covering topics such as *Education* including the education system and its reform after Yutori education, examinations and 'cram' schools, the ministry of education and curriculum management and *emotional and physical health of young people* including pressures on young people, the impact of pressure on health and eating habits and bullying
- **Changes in Culture** covering topics such as *popular culture* including anime, manga, music and martial arts and *the impact of technology* including advances in technology, robots and automation.
- **Society past and present** covering topics such as *changing labour markets* including collapse of the lifetime employment system, changes in attitudes to work and migration for work and *recession* including topics such as the impact of recession on daily life, the government response, economic internationalisation and the recruitment of immigrant workers.
- **Japan after the Great East Japan earthquake** covering topics such as *March 11th and shortly thereafter* including earthquake and tsunami damage, evacuation life, rescue, assistance and overseas reaction and *policy of reconstruction* including rebuilding the disaster area, volunteer and national unity and coping with the physical and psychological effects of the earthquake.

You may also want to include the study of a film or literary text from the prescribed list in the A level specification.

A Project can extend from ideas encountered during a course of study. However, the work submitted for the Project Qualification itself should be produced for this Qualification and should not be submitted elsewhere.

Below are some ideas for topics for each of the project outcomes but the opportunities are much more wide reaching and can be adapted to your own students' interests.

Unit 1 – Dissertation

The unit allows students to plan, research, analyse information and then evaluate and review the project. The findings and recommendations will then be presented by the student to a selected audience.

Dissertation titles should be in the form of a question. Successful dissertations are usually based on titles which allow scope for the exploration of argument and counter-argument or the consideration of alternative interpretations. Successful titles are typically formed through a process of refinement of ideas. The ideas described here represent starting points from which learners could begin a search for their own chosen question.

Ideas for Japanese could include:

1. Has Japanese cinema been a major influence on the world stage? (An extension from an A Level study of one film)?
2. A study into the economic reasons for migration around Japan
3. A study into the impact and influence tourism has had on Japan.

Unit 2 – Investigation / Field Study

This unit allows students to explore a research question or test a hypothesis using methods of data collection and analysis. Data collection techniques can include primary research in the form of experiments, field studies or surveys. Unanalysed data sets from published sources of data can also be used as a starting point for investigative analysis. Typically an Investigation / Field Study will include a testable hypothesis.

Ideas for Japanese could include:

1. A geographical field study evaluating data on the prevention of natural disasters.
2. A data study evaluating the impact of the education reform on the wellbeing of Japanese students.
3. A statistical survey into how political awareness has increased as a result of social media

Unit 3 – Performance

This unit allows students to produce a performance for an audience as well as provide written evidence to accompany the performance that will outline their research and evaluation of the performance. They then present the outcomes of the project to an audience.

Ideas for Japanese could include:

1. To use existing performance repertoire, for example plays, music, dance or choreography.
2. A language ‘experience’ – for example an immersive workshop or performance/ experience (in person or virtual) exploring language, culture or customs.
3. A lesson or talk on an aspect of the country relating to the language, for example a ‘history of…’. This could include culture, customs or food and drink.

Unit 4 – Artefact

This unit allows students to plan, research, develop and evaluate the production of an artefact. The artefact may take many forms, including a finished working prototype, model, artwork or design. Students also need to provide written evidence to accompany their artefact, which outlines their research and evaluation of the process.

Ideas for Japanese could include:

1. self-published book of new translations of poems
2. short story set in specific time and/or overseas location
3. teaching resources for a targeted age group – hard copy or digital format, including an app design

If you would like to register your interest in the Extended Project Qualification or find out more information about how to start on a Japanese focused title, please contact us.